

tearfund

GREETINGS FROM GILGAL EVANGELICAL CHURCH, RWANDA



Josephine uses the sewing machine bought using savings she made as part of her Self Help Group Photo: AESD/Tearfund

UPDATE FOR BLOOMFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WINTER 2019-20

Dear friends,

In a time of great uncertainty, Tearfund is praying for you. You mean so much to us and we are deeply grateful for your ongoing support. Thank you.

Here, you will find your latest quarterly update and story about the work happening through your partnership with Tearfund and Gilgal Evangelical Church.

As you read about the past season's work, please continue to pray for God's wisdom and protection in the communities they serve. Tearfund is working to assess how coronavirus is affecting the world's most vulnerable communities and how we can best support our partners and churches to make a meaningful, sustained response. We remain committed to going where the need is greatest, working with the local church and serving the most vulnerable people and their communities - and we truly appreciate your support in this way.

We hope to bring you more news from Gilgal Evangelical Church later in the year. Though during emergency responses, it can be difficult for partner staff to provide updates as regularly. Please do bear with us in the case of any delays.

May God be your peace and comfort always,

Derek Hall

Church Relationship Manager, Tearfund Northern Ireland

GREETINGS FROM GILGAL EVANGELICAL CHURCH

May the New Year start with fresh joys and a life filled with peace to you all brothers and sisters from Bloomfield Presbyterian church. We thank God for being on both our sides in the last year.

Your prayers, advice and financial support have been a great blessing, and most important to the mission of Gilgal church and the transformation of its surrounding communities.

We continue to pray for your church and your country,

Happy 2020

God bless you all!!

Rev Dr Bunini

Senior Pastor, Gilgal Evangelical Church.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?



Self Help Groups are voluntary associations of people formed to attain some common goals. A group will often have a similar social identity, heritage, or traditional occupation, and come together for a common cause. Together they may manage resources for the benefit of their group's members.

This season nine new Self Help Groups formed. Together, they have a total of 198 members. They are happy with the economic development, social and spiritual benefits of the groups. They've made plans to support one another and save money together. Funds they aim to use for development activities which help to tackle poverty and bring long term change for their communities.

38 local church leaders took part in training on the *Church and Community Transformation* approach. They represent 15 different denominations from Nyarugenge district. In their sessions, they spent time reflecting on their previous work and on the work of the Self Help Groups that have started in some of their churches.

'...COMPARING OUR CHURCH BEFORE JOINING THE CCT [CHURCH AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION] PROCESS TO WHERE WE ARE NOW, WE ARE AT A GOOD LEVEL OF TRANSFORMATION. IT STARTED FROM US PASTORS AND THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCHES FOLLOWING [IT] AND NOW WE ARE BUSY TRANSFORMING OUR COMMUNITIES SPIRITUALLY, ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY'

PASTOR MUFEREZO, EPR MWENDO

As a result of what's been happening all of the pastors have agreed to include the approach within their main church plans. To strengthen the work happening, they have committed to working more closely with the facilitators too.

36 church leaders met to discuss ways to ensure sustainability in the economy and environment. It is a discussion important to many of their communities as they experience the effects of climate change and disaster. For many, accessing water can be a particular challenge. One which affects everyday life. So they have been discussing ways to harness rainwater.

To do this they hope to invest in water tanks. This will be done through an initiative driven by Self Help Groups, who will use the money they save together to buy the tanks, promote hygiene and sanitation, and cover the costs of community health insurance. By saving in this way, 346 households have already covered their health insurance costs. **Meanwhile, the team continues to support 46 vulnerable children.**

HELPING DREAMS COME TRUE

When Josephine began learning about Self Help Groups a year ago she was going through a difficult time. Not long after she started taking part in training workshops about the groups, Josephine and her husband separated. It was a change in situation with potentially huge implications, for her and her three sons.

Josephine was faced with the daunting task of getting enough money to pay for rent and food. But in the midst of the challenge was her Self Help Group. With them Josephine began building back some of the security that her family had lost.

'THAT TIME I WAS UNHAPPY. I WAS PRAYING, AND LUCKILY GOT TRAINING FROM AESD AND THEY TAUGHT ME HOW TO WORK BY MYSELF.'
JOSEPHINE

Being part of a Self Help Group, gave Josephine an opportunity that might have been otherwise impossible. All because, week on week, her group had been saving money together.

From their joint savings fund, members were able to request loans. Money which they could use to buy essentials, or to invest into their businesses.

When Josephine took her first loan she had an inspired idea. She planned to buy recycled paper, and transform it into paper bags or envelopes.

Josephine started small, taking a loan of 2000 Rwandan Francs (between £1 and £2). Money that gave Josephine all she needed to buy her first batch of paper, which she used to craft her first bags and envelopes. Their sale made Josephine 6000 Rwandan Francs (almost £5).

Josephine used the income from that first sale to buy more paper. With her new stock Josephine made more bags and envelopes, sold them, and this time made 14,000 Rwandan Francs (between £11 and £12). With it she invested in more paper. As a result of this investment Josephine made 28,000 Rwandan Francs (almost £23). She then invested again, this time making almost 60,000 Rwandan Francs (almost £49). Then investing in the paper one final time, making 100,000 Rwandan Francs (more than £80).

Unfortunately, through the Government of Rwanda, Josephine discovered she was not allowed to sell recycled paper. But she was undeterred. She had another business idea.

Josephine knew she had a valuable skill - she can sew. So with the money she'd made from that first venture, Josephine invested again - this time in a sewing machine. Mobilising these different resources, Josephine started a tailoring business.

'NOW, I AM ABLE TO PAY THE RENT OF MY HOUSE AND ABLE TO BUY FOOD FOR MY CHILDREN.'

'I THANK AESD FOR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION TRAINING - THIS HELPED ME TO MAKE MY DREAMS COME TRUE. I THANK THE SELF HELP GROUP FOR CARING FOR ME. THEY DIDN'T ALLOW ME TO BE ALONE IN HARD SITUATIONS I FACED, BY VISITING ME AS MY FAMILY.'

'...I HAVE A VISION OF BUYING ONE MORE SEWING MACHINE WHICH HAS A VALUE OF 450,000RWF AND IT WILL HELP ME TO FINALISE THE CLOTHES.'

JOSEPHINE

PLEASE PRAY

Give thanks for Josephine's Self Help Group and the way they are working to support one another. Pray that their weekly meetings continue to be a source of blessing, and that their training sessions continue to inspire.

Pray for those taking part in the *Church and Community Transformation* process, and those benefiting from the activities happening as a result of what they are doing. Pray they experience real transformation - a lasting change, that serves all, particularly the most vulnerable - the street children, street vendors and those who have been widowed.

Pray for wisdom for AESD and Gilgal's staff as they serve others.

Pray for success and wisdom in the activities Gilgal Church have planned for 2020.

Pray for the church in Rwanda, who can play a key part in bringing transformation.

Pray that Gilgal's Bible College is able to access all the resources they need to train pastors who still require theological training to meet the requirements of recent laws brought in to help protect congregations and communities.



Following Jesus where the need is greatest